

A variety of Indian movements and their goals are discussed, in a national context and especially as they bear on the Indians of Wisconsin. There has been a tendency to believe that eventually all Indians would be assimilated and thereby disappear. Plans and efforts to facilitate the disappearance of the Indians are documented. In the short run, however, this may have resulted in more coherence among Indian peoples. In fact the "urbanized" American Indians may have developed more awareness and joy about their unique heritage as well as more interest in other American Indians.

The text avoids taking sides, permitting the data to speak for itself. While the text tends to give one the image of silent, stoical Indians coping with their situation, the photo section supplies an insight into human sensitivity which negates the stereotype. And, for this writer, the text and pictures both brought memories of old acquaintances, many now gone. Not heroes: good people.

This is a small book which fills a large gap in many other Wisconsin histories. It is scholarly and objective. My friends keep walking off with it. When they bring it back, they seem quite thoughtful.

—John Heimerl
Chippewa Falls, Wisconsin

J. Fred MacDonald, *Blacks and White TV/Afro-Americans in Television since 1948*. (Chicago: Nelson-Hall Publishers, 1983) xvi, 288 pp., \$23.95 cloth, \$11.95 paper.

Perhaps the most insightful statement MacDonald makes has not so much to do with blacks and television as it does with television itself: "TV . . . was subject to program decisions wherein commercial realities outweighed social ideas." To understand how black Americans have fared on television, one *must* understand the economic realities that underlie the medium. If a program cannot be sold to advertisers, it is not likely to be on television. Although one can deplore that state of affairs, it is difficult to argue that it is not the case.

The strength of this book is in its cataloging of program information; it apparently is the first book-length treatment of blacks in television. It is thorough, with an index of programs in addition to footnotes, bibliography, and standard index. The body of the book is clearly the work of an historian with a sense of the need to gather together from

disparate sources such who-what-when information. This information, however, is coupled with comments that too often leave the reader wishing the author would have gone further to help us understand "why" —why television, which some saw as promising so much, has delivered so little. Instead, the reader is asked to accept sweeping generalizations: "In the postwar United States, blacks exerted unprecedented influence in domestic politics. The integration of the armed services made black servicemen more influential in military affairs." Or one is left to puzzle over the implied significance of a statement such as, "One of the few programs to spotlight black talent regularly was American Bandstand." Or to wonder why, with so many "revolutionary" programs or programs that "radically" changed perceptions, television's record is judged so poor. One also wonders if MacDonald fully recognizes the medium-program-viewer relationship. Equally as important as what is on the screen is how it is received. There is little consideration of that in this book.

MacDonald is a professor of history at Northeastern Illinois University and a past president of the Popular Culture Association. What he provides with his book is a wealth of facts. For that we should be grateful. What we might also hope for is a subsequent analysis, for which MacDonald has provided the foundation.

— Barbara F. Luebke
University of Missouri, Columbia

Roger Mais. *Black Lightning*. (Exeter, NH: Heinemann Educational Books, Inc., 1983) 159 pp., \$4.95.

Upon first opening *Black Lightning*, the reader is surprised to find a fifteen-page introduction to a 136-page novel. Suspicions arise that here is a story that does not speak for itself! Careful examination reveals the introduction to be a scholarly, thorough (if a bit repetitious) review of the novel by Jean D'Costa of Hamilton College in New York. First published in 1955 (the same year Mais died at the age of fifty), *Black Lightning* was published again in 1983 as part of the Caribbean Writers Series with the introduction by D'Costa included. After reading the novel, one suspects that the introduction has been added in an attempt to elevate or justify a poorly-constructed work.